



SOUTH CAROLINA STRATEGIES MANUAL



Overview

Thirty years ago, more than 66 percent of children walked to school. Walking or cycling to school gives children a sense of freedom and responsibility, allows them to enjoy the outdoors, and gives them the opportunity to get to know their neighborhood while arriving to school alert and ready to start their day.



Now most American students are denied this experience; only 13 percent of children walk to school today. A successful safe routes to school program integrates health, fitness, traffic relief, environmental awareness, and safety under one program. It is an opportunity to work closely with your school, community, and local government to create a healthy lifestyle for children and a safer, cleaner environment for everyone.

Five key components of Safe Routes to School

- Encouragement
- Education
- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Evaluation



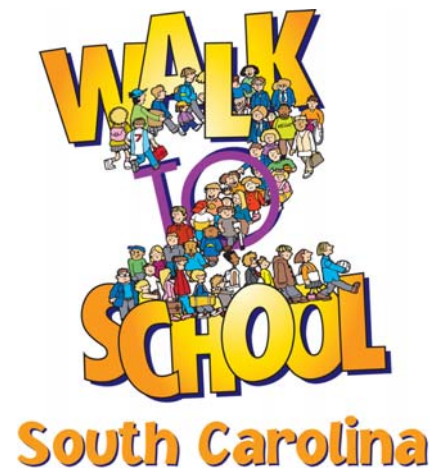
Encouragement

Suggestions

- Hold events such as Walk to School Day in October.
- Hold walk and bike to school days throughout the year.
- Have walking school buses and bicycle trains for children to walk or bike to school in groups.
- Have mileage clubs so that students can compete for incentives.
- Hold contests to encourage children to try a new behavior for rewards.

When it's too far or unsafe

- Have on campus events such as the “Morning Mile” which can be used so that children can be dropped off at school and then the entire school walks a mile together around the school grounds.
- Participate in a park and walk to school which can be set up where parents park in a nearby parking lot and then walk with their children to school. This is a good way to get parents involved and decrease traffic congestion.
- Safe Routes to bus stops can be used where children walk together in groups to a centralized bus stop location and then catch the bus to school.



Education

- Children, Parents, and Neighbors need educational messages.
- Children can be educated on pedestrian and bicycle safety, personal safety, health benefits, and the environment.
- When teaching pedestrian safety, it is important to teach the children where and how to cross the street.
- When students walk to school, teaching them to walk facing traffic and to use sidewalks when possible is important.
- Educate children about “stranger danger.” Go to www.missingkids.org for information about personal safety programs.
- Children can learn about health benefits of physical activity and the impact of traffic congestion and car use on the environment.
- Sources of instruction can come from teachers, police or fire personnel, local bicycle clubs, public health professionals, local Safe Kids coalition, parent, volunteer, school nurse, and school resource officers.
- It is important to educate parents so that they can reinforce safety skills. Also educate parents about safe driving around the school.
- Educate neighbors so that they watch for and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Teaching strategies

- Hold an assembly
- Classroom or PE instruction
- Integrate walking and biking education into traditional subjects
- Adopt a pedestrian and bicycle safety curriculum
- Allow children to practice safety skills



Engineering

Engineering describes maintenance, operational, and physical measures as well as low-cost and higher cost capital measures.

Around the school

- It is important to be familiar with the entire school enrollment area, not just the few blocks closest to the school.
- The school zone is the area directly adjacent to the school that is usually marked to alert motorists.
- Before implementing any engineering strategies, it is important to develop a school walking and bicycling map to serve all of the homes in the walking attendance boundary. This process helps to identify where crossing guards, crosswalks, and signs should be.
- School area speed limit signs work to slow down traffic for children.
- School crosswalk signs and advance warning signs can also be used to slow down traffic around the school.
- Pavement stencils are an effective way to communicate to drivers.

Along the school route

- Children need sidewalks and crossings in order to walk along the street or across it, which can also increase the likelihood that kids will walk to school.
- The connection from the sidewalk to the school is important. Make sure students aren't walking from the sidewalk through a dangerous and congested parking lot to get to school entrances.
- If possible, provide a sidewalk buffer such as plants or a bike lane.
- Street lighting can be used to improve pedestrian visibility and personal security.
- Create bicycle lanes or shoulders for cyclists.
- Make sure sidewalks are safe and usable and that paint is visible.
- Have a working bike rack on campus so that cyclists may be able to use it.
- Create paths from nearby neighborhoods to the school if possible.

Engineering, cont.

Crossing the street

- Focus on low cost, easy to implement solutions such as ramps, paint, and signs.
- Police enforcement is used in some jurisdictions.
- Reduce crossing distance with curb extensions and crossing islands.
- Paint “stand back” lines to keep children further back from busy streets when waiting to cross.
- Install marked crosswalks to indicate pedestrian crossing locations.
- Crosswalks should be installed on two-lane roads, multi-lane roads that aren’t too heavily traveled by motorists, where speed limits are 40 mph or less, and along school routes.

Slowing down traffic

- To reduce drivers’ speeds around the school use paint to narrow the lanes, use speed bumps where permitted, and reduce the radii of nearby curves.
 - Raised pedestrian crosswalks can be used on the streets and in school parking lots.
- * *With any engineering measures, check with local and state engineers for guidance.***



Enforcement

Everyone should play a positive role in enforcement including students, parents, teachers, school administrators, crossing guards, law enforcement, and the community. The role of enforcement is to increase awareness of safety, improve behavior, and reduce traffic safety problems.

Students

- Efforts should focus on changing the students' behaviors when walking and bicycling to and from school.
- Enforce both school rules and bicycle and pedestrian laws.

Community

- Unsafe driving behaviors should be changed among motorists that drive within the school zone. Law enforcement can be used to give warnings and tickets to unsafe drivers.
- Neighborhood speed watch programs can get the community involved in educating the drivers in the community.

Parents

- Enforcing safe driving behaviors among parents that drive on the school campus is important.
- Parents can be role models to their children and practice safe walking and bicycling.



Enforcing, cont.

School

- Driveway monitors can be used to monitor the traffic in the school parking lot.
- Safety patrol and crossing guards can be used at pick up and drop off to enforce motorist safety.
- Safety patrol is a way to get students involved in promoting traffic safety as well as being an educating tool for students.
- For multilane busy streets, two crossing guards may be needed.
- Driveway monitors may be needed if students have to cross busy school driveways.

Law Enforcement

- Having law enforcement officers on site can teach safety to the students, evaluate traffic concerns, provide police presence to discourage dangerous behaviors, and to monitor guards and students.
- Effective law enforcement requires the support of the community, schools, and law enforcement agency. Once you have this, media coverage may be effective to create awareness, warn the public about enforcement strategies, and demonstrate that enforcement is now occurring.



Drop Off / Pick Up

When assessing the drop off and pick up process, activity on school grounds and in the area surrounding the school needs to be addressed.

Strategies

- Curb striping – Use different color stripes on the curbs so the parents know where they can and can't stop/park.
- Pavement markings – Include directions on and off campus.
- Signage – Signs can be used in conjunction to pavement markings.
- Orange traffic cones can be used to keep cars out of areas where they are not wanted.
- On street drop off and pick up lane.
- Curb-side assistants can help students exit and enter cars quickly and orderly.
- Regular reminders are a way schools can keep parents informed on policies.
- Encourage carpooling to limit the number of cars in the pick up and drop off lines.
- Park and walk – Parents park their cars in a designated off-site parking lot and walk their child to school.

Improving the drop off and pick up process will increase safety for everyone on route to school as well as on school grounds.

Improving safety of students as well as increasing the number of students that walk to school is the goal of the Safe Routes to School Program. Drop off and pick up procedures should not be made simply to increase convenience for drivers.



Evaluation

In order to know where we're going, we must know where we've been. Take baseline data for your program using the two simple Safe Routes to School survey methods. Then, throughout your program, collect the data again to determine what is working and what is not.

The Parent Survey and the Student In-Class Student Tally Sheet may be found on the internet at www.saferoutesinfo.org/data/

Other methods of evaluation may depend on the goals of your Safe Routes to School Program. For example: Do you hope to reduce traffic congestion? Count vehicles in a specific timeframe and distance near the school.



Creating a Safe Routes to School Program

1. Bring together the right people and form a Safe Routes to School Committee
2. Gather information and identify issues
3. Find solutions
4. Make a plan
5. Get the plan funded
6. Act on the plan
7. Evaluate and make changes if needed

Additional Resources

www.saferoutesinfo.org
www.dot.state.sc.us/community/saferoutes.shtml
www.saferoutesmichigan.org
www.americabikes.org
www.cawalktoschool.com